

## Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4596

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 5495

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PLO, US

SUBJ: FAHUM REVIEWS PCC MEETING

1. YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR PEKIC, WHO RETURNS TO BELGRADE NEXT WEEK FOR REASSIGNMENT IN FONMINISTRY AFTER FOUR YEARS IN DAMASCUS, PAID FAREWELL CALL ON ME AUGUST 27. DISCUSSION FOCUSED ON AUGUST 25/26 MEETING OF PCC. PEKIC HAS BEEN CLOSE TO PLO PERSONALITIES INCLUDING ARAFAT AND KHALID FAHUM AND GAVE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF HIS MEETING WITH PNC CHAIRMAN FAHUM WHICH TOOK PLACE EARLIER TODAY.

2. PEKIC ASKED FAHUM CITING THE PCC HARDLINE COMMUNIQUE, HOW PLO FORSAW ITS NEXT STEPS. PEKIC SAID HE FELT THAT FAHUM'S REPLY REFLECTED EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS AT THE AUGUST 25/26 PCC MEETING. FAHUM OPENED WITH ASSERTION THAT PLO LEADERSHIP SINCERELY WANTS CONTACTS WITH THE USG. IT IS CONVINCED AMERICAN LEADERS ARE REALISTIC AND SEEK TO TAKE U.S. INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST INTO ACCOUNT. BUT, PEKIC INTERJECTED, HOW DID THEY INTEND TO INITIATE CONTACT SINCE THEY HAD EFFECTIVELY JUST REJECTED CARTER'S OFFER? FAHUM REPLIED THAT THE U.S. MUST FIRST STIMULATE CLOSER CONTACTS BETWEEN THE CONFRONTATION STATES AND THE PLO. HOWEVER, IMPORTANT IT IS FOR THE PLO TO BE SUPPORTED BY EGYPT AND SAUDI  
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ARABIA, THE PRESTIGE OF THESE TWO STATES AMONG PALESTINIANS IS "NEITHER VERY HIGH NOR DECISIVE." THE PALESTINIAN LEADERS MUST BE BACKED BY BOTH SYRIA AND JORDAN. JORDANIAN, SYRIAN AND PLO COOPERATION WILL HELP KEEP THE MODERATES IN CONTROL TO THE PLO. INTIMATE SYRIAN PARTICIPATION IN ANY DECISION ABOUT THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM MAKES THE PLO LEADERSHIP MORE SECURE. ACTIVE JORDANIAN PARTICIPATION IS ALSO INDISPENSABLE,

BECAUSE OF THE MASSIVE NUMBER OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN.

3. THE U.S., FAHUM CONTINUED, MUST WHEN DEVELOPE ANOTHER FORMULA FOR TALKS WITH THE PALESTINIANS. IF WASHINGTON CANNOT HAVE DIRECT TALKS WITH PLO THEN SUCH TALKS COULD BE BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND AN ARAB DELEGATION REPRESENTING EGYPT, SYRIA, JORDAN AND THE PLO, PLUS SAUDI ARABIA IF NECESSARY. ALTERNATIVELY, PERHAPS IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR WASHINGTON TO HAVE TALKS WITH AN ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION IN WHICH THE PLO WOULD BE INCLUDED. IN EITHER CASE, SUCH TALKS COULD BE OUTSIDE OF THE GENEVA FRAMEWORK. THEY COULD TAKE PLACE ANYWHERE WASHINGTON DESIRED, PERHAPS IN SOME NEUTRAL COUNTRY WHICH COULD GUARANETT SECRECY.

4. ARAFAT  
FAHUM ASSERTED THAT ARAFAT REMAINS THE STRONGEST INDIVIDUAL IN THE PLO LEADERSHIP AND ONE OF THE MOST MODERATE. BUT HE DRIVES HIS MAIN STRENGTH FROM FATAH. IF PRESSED TOO HARD TO MAKE MAJOR DECISIONS FOR THE PLO AS A WHOLE AT PRESENT, HE WILL BE WEAKENED AND PARALYZED. THE US FAHUM ADDED, SHOULD SHARE IN EFFORT TO REINFORCE ARAFAT'S PRESTIGE IN PALESTINIAN GROUPS BEYOND FATAH.

5. PCC MEETING  
FAHUM SAID THAT THE AUGUST 26 PCC COMMUNIQUE WAS UNANIMOUSLY CONFIDENTIAL

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ADOPTED BY ALL 46 WHO ATTENDED. (SIX MEMBERS HAD BEEN ABSENT: QADUMI IN TUNIS, ABU MAZIN IN CAIRO, ABU SHLAH FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT, ONE SAIQA REP WAS MISSING AND THE TWO PFLP REPS HAD REFUSED TO ATTEND.) AS EVIDENCE OF THE UNANIMITY OF THE OPSITION OPPOSING ACCEPTANCE OF 242 WAS THE DICISION OF THE TWO REPS OF THE JORDAIAN COMMUNIST PARTIES TO JOIN THEIR FELLOW PCC MEMBERS IN APPROVINT THE COMMUNIQUE DESPITE THEIR KNOWLEDGE THAT THE SOVIETS FAVORED PLO ACCEPTANCE OF 242.

6. FAHUM CONCLUDED THAT THE NEXT PCC SESSION IN ABOUT THREE WEEKS TIME WOULD REVIEW THE MEETING OF THE ARAB LEAGUE IN CAIRO, THE RESULTS OF ARAFAT'S VISIT TO MOSCOW, WHICH WILL BEGIN AUGUST 29, AND DEBATE THE PLO POSITION FOR NEW YORK.

7. PEKIC COMMENTED THAT TAHUM'S SUGGESTIONS OF HOW THE U.S. MIGHT INITIATE CONTACT WITH THE PLO ILLUSTRATED HOW MUCH THE PLO WANTS THIS CONTACT. SAID HE TOLD FAHUM AT THE END OF THEIR CONVERSTATION THE HE. PEKIC, WAS ABOUT TO CALL ON ME AND THAT HE PROPOSED TO RELAY THESE VIEWS TO ME. (PEKIC EMPASIZED THAT FAHUM HAD NO PIOR KNOWLEDGE OF OUR

MEETING.) FAHUM INTERPOSED NO OBJECTION TO THE TRANSMITTAL OF HIS VIEWS AND HAD NOTED THAT HE WOULD INFORM ONLY FARFAT THAT PEKIC INTENDED TO RELAY THEM.

8. PEKIC ALSO INFORMED ME THAT ASSAD HAD CALLED IN ARAFAT AND SOM EXCOMM MEMBERS AUGUST 12, AFTER SECRETARY'S SECOND VISIT HERE, AND EXPRESSED ANGER THAT PLO WAS APPARENTLY FAVORING A SAUDI INITIATIVE RE 242 WITHOUT PRIOR COORDINATION WITH SYRIA. PEKIC ASID HE WAS COMPLETING HIS TOUR HERE DEPRESSED AT THE PERVASIVENESS OF INTER-ARAB RIVALRY THE CONTINUED DEEP SUSPICIONS OF SYRIA TOWARDS THE U.S. HE SAID THAT KHADDAM THREE DAYS AGO HAD DETAILED TO HIM SYRIA'S CONVICTION THE RECENT U.S. MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMACY REFLECTED CONTINUING AMERICAN EFFORTS TO MANIPULATE AND DIVIDE THE ARABS.  
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OM COMMENT:

FAHUM IS, OF COURSE, KNOWN AS ONE OF THE PLO'S LEADERS CLOSEST TO SYRIA. HIS COMMENTS ON THE NEED FOR A PARTICULARLY CLOSE SYRIAN/PLO COORDINATION AND HIS DEPRECACTION OF THE CAIRO/JIDDA ROLE SHOULD BE READ THROUGH THAT TOPIC.

10. SUGGEST PASS AMMAN, CAIRO, JIDDA AND TEL AVIV.  
MURPHY

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